

## Conference Report

# Bridging the US and China together to conquer cancer: report of the 4th annual meeting of the US Chinese Anti-Cancer Association (USCACA)

Wancai Yang<sup>1,2</sup> and Lingjie Guan<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

A global collaborative effort is pivotal to conquer cancer. Themed “Emerging role of China in global clinical development of novel anti-cancer drugs”, the US Chinese Anti-Cancer Association (USCACA) held its 4th annual meeting in Chicago on June 2, 2012, in conjunction with the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting to further bridge the US and China together to outsmart cancer. Although a young organization, USCACA has made significant contributions to this goal in the 3 years since its inception through extensive collaboration with academic organizations, the pharmaceutical industry, and governmental agencies. USCACA has engaged various stakeholders in developing translational and personalized medical strategies to facilitate new anti-cancer drug development and clinical trials in China. USCACA has initiated and implemented the USCACA-National Foundation for Cancer Research (NFCR) scholarship to encourage overseas returnees to continue cancer research in China. USCACA announced the Hengrui-USCACA scholarship to fund clinical trial staff from China to conduct the observation of early oncologic clinical trials in the US. During the annual meeting, distinguished panelists and the audience discussed the following critical topics: (1) oncologic translational research and early development capabilities in China; (2) novel chemical entity development and partnership with Chinese companies; and (3) Chinese participation in global anti-cancer drug development. USCACA will continue to promote collaborations among cancer researchers and clinicians in the US and China by engaging in more frequent communications and joint efforts across fields, disciplines, and countries, diligently working together toward curing and eliminating cancers.

Chicago, IL-June 2, 2012. The US Chinese Anti-Cancer Association (USCACA) successfully held its 4th annual meeting in Chicago on June 2, 2012, in

conjunction with the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) annual meeting. The theme for this year was “Emerging role of China in global clinical development of novel anti-cancer drugs”. Approximately 200 ASCO attendees from the pharmaceutical industry, cancer research organizations, and universities joined the meeting. A group of selected speakers discussed topics in three exciting areas: (1) oncologic translational research and early development capabilities in China; (2) novel chemical entity development and partnership with Chinese companies; and (3) Chinese participation in global anti-cancer drug development.

**Authors' Affiliations:** <sup>1</sup>Department of Pathology, Xinxiang Medical University, Xinxiang, Henan 453003, P.R. China; <sup>2</sup>Department of Pathology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Illinois 60612, USA; <sup>3</sup>Ingenuity Systems Inc., 1700 Seaport Blvd, Redwood City, California 94063, USA.

**Corresponding Author:** Wancai Yang, Department of Pathology, Xinxiang Medical University, 601 East Jinsui Ave., Xinxiang, Henan 453003, P.R. China. Tel: +86-373-3029106, Email: wancaiyang@xxmu.edu.cn.

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*Dr. Wei Zhang, President of USCACA, is giving the opening remark.*

Dr. Wei Zhang, President of USCACA, opened the meeting by reiterating the mission and vision of USCACA and highlighted the major achievements of USCACA in the past two years. Among the achievements were the following:

- USCACA collaborated with the Chinese Society of Clinical Oncology (CSCO) to organize two international conferences titled “Early Oncology Clinical Development Forum and Translational Research” and “Biomarker Summit” in Xiamen, China, in 2011. Three members of the USCACA executive committee (Drs. Li Yan, Li Xu, and Wei Zhang) were elected as the members of the CSCO biomarker committee.
- Through collaborations between USCACA, South Texas Accelerated Therapeutics (START), and Fudan Cancer Hospital in Shanghai, China, the first internationally integrated phase I clinical research center in China, START Shanghai, was founded in September 2011, and the first clinical trial began this year.
- USCACA formed a partnership with a top-ranked cancer journal in China, the *Chinese Journal of Cancer (CJC)*. Through mutual endeavors, *CJC* has published 18 high-quality issues, and the journal citations have increased significantly this year. Dr. Wei Zhang has called on the members and friends of USCACA to continue to support *CJC* and make it an SCI-indexed top international cancer journal.
- One of the key missions of USCACA is cancer education and training. Dr. Wei Zhang proudly announced that USCACA had successfully partnered with the National Foundation of Cancer Research (NFCR) in the US to establish the USCACA-NFCR scholarship. Five scholars were recognized during 2010-2011, including 3 at the international cancer conference jointly organized by *CJC* and USCACA

in 2011. Under the leadership of Dr. Shiyuan Cheng, a member of the USCACA executive committee, USCACA plans to select 4 awardees in 2012. Dr. Franklin Salisbury Jr., President of NFCR, attended the meeting and reaffirmed NFCR’s commitment to this highly successful scholarship program.

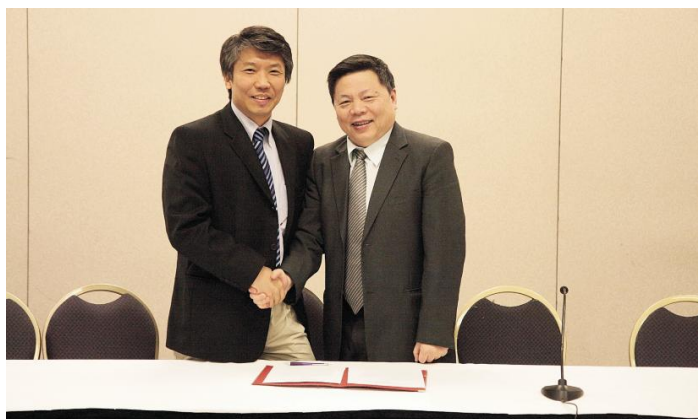
Dr. Wei Zhang and Dr. Li Yan, Managing Director of USCACA, presented the first USCACA Distinguished Partner Award to Pfizer and PharmaNet/i3 in special recognition of their partnership and support to USCACA’s mission and to oncologic clinical research in China. Dr. Mace Rosenberg, Senior Vice President and Global Head of Clinical Development and Medical Affairs of Pfizer Oncology, and Dr. Dalvir Gill, President of Phase 2 to 4 Services of PharmaNet/i3, accepted the awards on behalf of their companies. Drs. Li Xu and Pascal Qian, members of the USCACA executive committee, received USCACA Distinguished Service Awards acknowledging their contribution in facilitating collaboration among cancer researchers and clinicians in the US and China. Dr. Wei Zhang further outlined the bright future for continued collaboration and specifically noted that “to elevate Chinese clinical research to the leading global level requires close partnership among academia, industry sponsors, and regulatory agencies in the US and China,” and that “cancer is smart because cancer cells talk to each other, let’s outsmart cancer by more communications and joint actions among us across fields, disciplines, and countries.” Honorable guests Dr. Jin Gu, President of the Chinese Society of Oncology (CSO), and Dr. Margaret Foti, CEO of the American Cancer Research Association (AACR), further emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to conquer cancer in the near future, and they also congratulated USCACA on its achievements in promoting collaboration in cancer research since its inauguration in 2009.



*Dr. Margaret Foti, CEO of AACR, is speaking on the importance of collaborative effort to conquer cancer.*

In the era of molecularly targeted cancer therapy, the implementation of biomarkers in early-phase clinical trials is essential to understand the mechanism of targeted therapies and to achieve the ultimate goal of personalized medicine. Dr. Yi-Long Wu, President of CSCO, gave a keynote speech on biomarker and translational research in China, highlighting the USCACA-CSCO collaborative initiatives in forming the CSCO Biomarkers and Translational Research

Committee to standardize, coordinate, and prioritize biospecimen collection and resources to maximize the clinical use of biomarkers in anti-cancer drug development in China. Professor Jun-Yi Cao at Fudan Cancer Hospital presented the state-of-the-art-capacity for the first internationally integrated phase I clinical research center START Shanghai in China, which is a comprehensive clinical research center dedicated to early-phase anti-cancer drug development.



*Dr. Wei Zhang, President of USCACA, left, and Dr. Yi-Long Wu, President of CSCO, are signing the USCACA-CSCO collaboration agreement on biomarkers and translational research.*

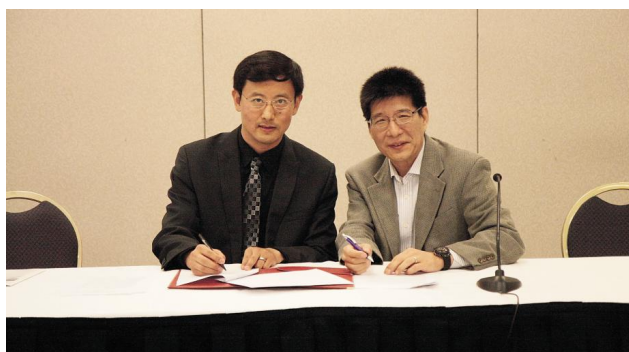
In the wave of the economic boom in China in the past 10 years, many Chinese pharmaceutical companies have gradually evolved their business from manufacturing generic drugs to discovering and developing novel medicines, which has created many exciting opportunities for international collaboration on anti-cancer drug development. Dr. Hua Mu, Senior Vice President, Clinical Development of Hutchison MediPharma, one of the prominent Chinese pharmaceutical companies engaged in novel anti-cancer drug research and development, presented an example of collaboration with AstraZeneca to develop a novel and selective c-MET kinase inhibitor. He further shared their drug development pipeline and welcomed more partnership for future

drug development.

Dr. Lianshang Zhang, President, Global R&D of Hengrui Pharmaceutical Co., another leading pharmaceutical company in the area of anti-cancer drug development in China, introduced Hengrui's promising pipeline, with a strong interest in partnership for the co-development of novel chemical entities in China and worldwide. On behalf of Mr. Piao-Yang Sun, Chairman of the Board of Hengrui Pharmaceutical Co., Dr. Lianshang Zhang announced a generous donation of US \$19 000 to establish the Hengrui-USCACA training scholarship. The program will be dedicated to support junior investigators and researchers involved in drug research for early-stage cancers. The scholarship will first fund a

researcher from Guangdong General Hospital to conduct observations at the phase I center at Wisconsin

Comprehensive Cancer Center.



*Dr. Li Yan, Managing Director of USCACA, left, is acknowledging receipt of the Hengrui-USCACA training scholarship presented by Dr. Lianshang Zhang, President, Global R&D of Hengrui Pharmaceutical Co.*

Dr. Michael Shi, a member of the USCACA Executive Committee, led the panel discussion among a group of distinguished panelists consisting of Dr. Pablo Cagnoni, Senior Vice President, Oncology Clinical Development of Novartis; Dr. Jorge Puente, President of Asia Pacific and Canada of Pfizer Oncology; Dr. Eric Rubin, Vice President, Oncology TA Head of Merck; Dr. Gerd Stehle, Vice President, Oncology of Boehringer Ingelheim; Dr. Michael Vasconcelles, Senior Vice President, Oncology of Millennium; The Takeda Oncology Company; Dr. Jason Jin, CEO of Shanghai Bio; Dr. Shou-ching Tang, the Founding President of USCACA; and Dr. Christopher Ung, President & COO of Cistrogene. The discussion focused on the key issues around China's emerging role in global clinical research and the development of novel anti-cancer drugs. The panelists shared their opinions on how to address these critical issues for US companies to conduct translational clinical research in China and also recommended possible solutions for biomarker tissue sample handling and analysis as well as the investigational new drug (IND) review process by the State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA) of China. Dr. Jiang, a founder of Fountain Medical Development Co., shared the exciting news that more clinical phase I research centers are being established, and Chinese SFDA has recognized the issues surrounding the IND review process and is making an effort to shorten the review period.

As Dr. Wei Zhang closed the meeting, he remarked on the importance of collaboration among cancer researchers and clinicians in the US and China, reiterated the goal of USCACA, and welcomed cancer researchers and clinicians to attend the USCACA-dedicated sessions at CACA and CSCO annual meetings, both in September 2012 in Beijing.

## Acknowledgments

The authors thank all the executive members of

USCACA for their contributions to the annual meeting and to this report.

## About USCACA

USCACA is a non-exclusive organization that welcomes all who want to volunteer time and effort to support cancer research and education. The mission of USCACA is to facilitate collaborations among Chinese and American professionals in the field of cancer research, treatment, and prevention; promote knowledge and information exchange between the professionals in the US and China; and provide educational information to serve cancer patients, their families, and the community. The members of USCACA work hard to bring clinical trials and new approved therapeutics to China to benefit cancer patients. (<http://www.uscaca.org>).

## USCACA Board of Directors

Jin Gu, M.D., Professor of Beijing Cancer Hospital, School of Oncology, Peking University, President of Chinese Medical Association (CMA), Oncology.

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Wei Zhang, Ph.D., Professor of Pathology and Cancer Biology, Director, Cancer Genomics Core Laboratory, the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center.